CHAPTER-II

Emergence of Taliban
EMERGENCE OF TALIBAN

Historical Background

Amidst East and the West in the Asian continent, Afghanistan is a landlocked mountainous country surrounded by the countries like Pakistan, Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, China and Russia etc. It is a nation in making which is set to forge unity as a means to traditionalism with industrialization.

Though the cycle of history, from times immemorial recognized the right of a few communities and regions to establish their independent identity on the surface of the earth, most of the areas and regions had to bear the brunt of the frequent military conquest and political domination by the alien powers. The intruders in Afghanistan not only intended to control and exploit the natural resources of the region but were also opposed to the age old system of thought and social institutions and were inclined to replace them with a different set of belief. The Central force to combat this ideological onslaught was Islam. The abortive attempts of Britain to take Afghanistan during the nineteenth century and the pressure from the Soviet Union have strengthened the resolve of the Ulama to resist outside interference and to render the government of Afghanistan more purely Islamic.

Historically speaking Afghanistan had no independent political identity and was the part of the one or the other major empire of the Achaemendis, Greeks, Mournys, Kushans, Indo-Greeks, Mongols, Chaznizvids, Ghours and Khwarizamians etc. The intervening period saw the occurrence of recurring infighting and wars sometimes amongst the indigenous tribal groups and at
Portrait heads of Dost Muhammad, and three members of his family, E. Eden, June 1841. ©The British Library [WD 1291]
times with outside forces it was only towards the 18th century that Ahmad Shah Durrani evolved the first nation state by involving most of the Afghans through a well devised policy of motivations and appeasement, though his efforts were later rendered abortive due to the wars that followed between the imperialist powers and the Afghans in the 19th century. However, the foreign rule/intervention had one silver lining as it transformed Afghanistan into a centre of hybrid culture of par excellence on the one hand and the settlement of diverse ethnic groups in the country on the other hand. But in the country like Afghanistan where the state is seen as external to society and where people's allegiance is directed primarily towards their local community, the only thing which all Afghans have in common is Islam.

Afghan history before the critically period beginning in 1973 may be divided into five periods. During the two earlier periods to entity the name Afghanistan existed, but because the territory lies at the crossroads of many cultures and of Asian migration routes, its earliest human history is rich in art, architecture, and archeological remains. These two earliest periods may be broadly categorized as pre-Islamic and Islamic. It was only during the later three periods that Afghanistan began to assume its contemporary form. The country began to appear during the eighteenth century and emerged at the end of the century as a budding empire spreading west and south. During the course of nineteenth century the empire declined rapidly, and Afghanistan became a client state of Great Britain. This status ended in 1919 with the emergence of an independent monarchy. The five historical periods are as under:-

The pre-Islamic period 500 BC to 700 CE (Achaemenidis, Greeks, Mouryans, Kushans, Indo-Greeks, Mongols). The medieval and late medieval Islamic period 700 CE to 1709 CE (Arabs, Saminds, Ghaznavides, Ghours, Mongols, Ilkans, Timurids, Mughals). The period of Afghan Empire, 1709 CE to 1826 CE ( Mir
As is evident, Afghanistan has been in turmoil throughout its history. No other country has been through such conflicts and wars than Afghanistan. Regrettably, its history has been shaped by too many people that the Afghans themselves find it difficult to remember. The irony is that history keeps on repeating itself because neither the Afghans nor the other people of the world have drawn any lessons from it. The salient milestones of the history of Afghanistan since 1979 are as under:

The political instability in Afghanistan resulted in armed invasion by neighboring super power with special reference to former USSR (1979) and consequently military presence long lasted till 1989. The communist regime installed by the Soviet invasion survived until April, 1992, first under Babric Kamal (1979-86) and than under Dr. Najibullah (1986-92). The 'ten long years of struggle against the Soviet occupation of their country did not bring this nation onto a single platform. Although all of the Islam-pasand parties fought for the common purpose of evicting the Soviet troops from their land and replacing the Communist Afghan Government with an Islamic one, however, in the process no religio-ethnic unity was demonstrated by them. The end of the war against the Russian enemies resulted in a new array of conspiracies of the international powers over the Jihadi parties by means of relinquishing Kabul to the hands of Masoud and the Communist militias headed by Rashid Dostum, and the exclusion of the Hizbi Islami (Islamic Party) from rule. This led to the bitter conflict which the Muslims paid for dearly whereby more than forty thousand civilians were killed, cities and towns were destroyed and gangs and
highwaymen became widespread in the midst of a dangerous increase in drug dealings. This tragic state was not only caused by the adversity, deprivation and poverty of the citizens, but also by the misunderstanding of some leaders to the planned conspiracy while insisting to remain in command, and then joining in some interlocked alliance with the Communists, Shites, etc. This led the people to lose confidence on the leaders engaged in a struggle over power, especially when those alliances between the jihadi parties and Dostoum's party and other criminals especially the war lords was changing monthly and even hourly. As such, "Afghanistan has moved from a holy war into a civil war." In late April 1992, the disintegration of the Soviet-installed Najibullah government in Kabul and the success of the Mujahedin, led by Commander Ahmad Shah Massoud in taking over the capital opened a euphoric yet painful phase in the historical evolution of Afghanistan. The removal of the dreaded Najibullah's regime finally vindicated the Afghans' popular resistance to the attempted imposition of Soviet-style socialism. The Mujahedin takeover was welcomed by many Afghans in the expectation of returning their war-ravaged country to peace and order. However, their expectations were soon to be confounded for the Mujahedin victory quickly turned sour, making their rule a continuation of the warfare of the preceding thirteen years, with further tragic losses for the Afghans. It is to focus on what went wrong with the Islamic government of President Burhaanuddin Rabbani, which assumed the reins of power in Kabul from June 1992 until it was forced by the Taliban militia to retreat north in September 1996. The process of legitimating on which the Rabbani government sought to ground


2 However the reality is far more complex. Afghanistan is part of a multi-layered and inter-dependent conflict system, in much the same way as the Great Lakes region is part of a wider zone of instability. Jones, W., "A partnership perspective on: Doing development in complex political emergencies: perils and possibilities". Paper presented at "NGOs and the Global Future" Conference in Birmingham, January, 1999. See also, Jonathan Goodhand, *From Holy War to Opium War? A Case Study of the Opium Economy in North Eastern Afghanistan* IDPM, University of Manchester, 1999

its claim to power was forged under complex circumstances but was at best rudimentary. Political legitimation has historically been an elusive process and a daunting objective to achieve in Afghanistan. No government since the foundation of modern Afghanistan in the mid-eighteenth Century has come into existence on the basis of a direct popular mandate. Legal rational frame works and constitutional legitimacy marked Afghan politics only for a short time, from 1964-1973, and even then only in a very limited sense. In Afghanistan, political order and governance have always largely rested on a mixture of personalized, clientelistic politics, and elite alliance and elite settlement, legitimating through traditional mechanism of consensus building and empowerment, such as the Loya Jirga (grand assembly)- but with the threat or actual use of force frequently deplored as means of rule enforcement and rule maintenance. Given the dearth of legitimized avenues for political expression, regime change and development has often proved arbitrary and violent. It was in this context, that Najibullah's government faced severe legitimacy problems and the alternative Islamic resistance government sought legitimation and public acceptance.

As the collapse of the Najibullah government approached, the Mujahidin remained as fragmented along ethno-linguistic, tribal, sectarian and personality lines as ever. The leaders of the seven main Islamic Mujahidin groups, who were based in Pakistan had failed to agree on a common political platform and there was little cohesion among the leaders of minority Shi'ite Islamic groups, who were based in Iran. There were no effective links between the Shi'ite and Sunni groups. None of the groups or their respective leaders had managed to develop a national profile or a nation wide following. Most groups functioned as fighting militias with specific localities from which their leaders originated, and enjoyed the support substantially along lines of ethnic or tribal identification, although

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this does not imply that they pursued ethnically-exclusivist recruitment policies. The group leaders often exercised only nominal influence over their commanders and other autonomous resistance figures. The resistance was not in a position to invoke any legal or for that matter conventional process of political change to create a broad-based and representative Islamic government to replace the regime of Najibullah. In this setting no outside mediation could produce any desirable result either. The UN efforts to put together a transitional team, composed of 'neutral' Afghans, proved futile, although the inability of the Secretary-General's representative Benon Sevan to develop an appropriate understanding of the nature of the Afghan conflict also played its part in this respect. The collapse of Najibullah's regime represented a political revolution, even if not a social one. As a consequence, the imminent fall of Najibullah's government provoked a scramble among the Mujahidin leaders for power.

Due to the tribal nature of Afghan society, the country could not throw up a charismatic leader who, as an accepted political leader and as the head of national army, would command the respect of all the anti-Communist elements in Afghanistan. The result was that when the common objective was achieved, they began to fight among themselves. Due to the ravages of such ongoing war; Kabul has been without municipal, water and electricity since 1994. This state of affairs has not improved by the time of writing the present thesis. Trade is frequently blockaded and subjected to extortionate taxes by local power holders. Nearly everywhere a new generation is emerging with minimal education in a land infested with landmines, due to which thousands of civilians continue to be killed or maimed. The UN reports that the socio-economic conditions of the

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5 Oliver Roy, Afghanistan Back to Tribalism or on to Lebanon?, Third World Quarterly, Volume 11, no.04, Pp 70-80.
population were amongst the worst in the world. The investment of previous governments into schools, roads and hospitals were reduced to near insignificance. Literacy rates were at an extreme low, with estimates showing that they had plummeted to as low as 4 per cent for women. Healthcare was rudimentary at best, with many being without access to even the basics. Every year thousands of children died from malnutrition and respiratory infections, and maternal mortality rates were one of the highest in the world. Irrigation systems and the agricultural sector have been neglected and destroyed. Even today’s Afghanistan is plagued by a perpetual orgy of destruction, impoverishment and repression. One to two million Afghans have been killed. There remain over 2 million Afghan refugees in Iran and Pakistan, making Afghans the largest single refugee group in the entire world.*

This state of affair made the day to day life of Afghans a hell. The common masses were fed up and everyone was looking for a change in the system, which ensures them peace, harmony and security to honour and property of the citizens. Against this backdrop of strive and regular outside intervention, a consensus grew among the concerned Mullahs in the Pashtun region around a three point programme: restoration of peace, disarming of civilians and the full application of sharia...* Thus the faction of student’s organization came into existence known as Taliban. "The Taliban perpetually announced that they were fighting merely for the word of Islam to remain transient. However at the same time they emphasized that their first task was to purify the country from the stains of hypocrisy that manifest themselves in the so called Mujahidin. Mujahidin internal conflict, which inflicted heavy damages and huge sufferings on Afghanistan, provided the Taliban with a golden chance to verify the claim over

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*Socio-Religious Outlook of Taliban

the corruption and hypocrisy of their opponents." Thus, "The Taliban emerged as a reformist force -- honest, fierce and devoutly Islamic. Most of them preferred to go to the neighboring country Pakistan as refugees for their advanced studies to be accomplished in the religious schools."

TALIBAN: Definition and Connotation

Towards the close of Twentieth Century, the world witnessed an event of far reaching consequence and it was the emergence of Taliban (Persianised plural of Arabic word "Talib", literally meaning students but widely used for religious students) Emerging as a local outfit of Afghan freedom fighters, the Taliban within a short span of time turned into a movement and influenced the ideology of millions of Muslims particularly suppressed youth from around the globe.

In late 20th century Afghanistan suffered ruinous effect of prolonged civil war, invasion by Soviet Union (1979) and Soviet military presence (1979-89). In September, 1996, the long power struggle between Afghanistan’s armed sections appeared to have taken a decisive turn when Taliban militia captured Kabul after taking control of Afghanistan’s Southern city of Kandahar and neighboring areas during 1994. With these territorial advances most of Afghanistan’s traditionally Pashtun homelands were united under the Taliban control.

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11 The Taliban are widely alleged to be the creation of Pakistan’s military intelligence. Experts say that explains the Taliban’s swift military successes. Anita Pratap, *Cable News Network*, October-5, 1996
12 In Urdu, Taliban is plural of Talib i.e. a student or person in search of knowledge. In Pashho the word Taliban generally denotes the students studying in the Deeni Madars (religious Institutions. Kamal Matinudin, *The Taliban Phenomenon: Afghanistan*, 1994-97, p 12.
13 *Encyclopedia Britannica, Ed 2001*
14 However the lack of experience among the Taliban leaders in political, diplomatic, economic and cultural affairs and as well as determination to interpret human rights on the basis of a particular school of thought rather according to more widely so-called accepted contemporary principles bring the Taliban into confrontation with the logic of today’s world.
According to Ahmad Rashid, the Taliban were born out of the meetings and discussions among people who were deeply concerned over the situation in the country. All those who gathered around Omar were the children of the jihad but deeply disillusioned with the factionalism and criminal activities of the once idealized Mujahidin leadership. He further says, many of them had been born in Pakistani refugee camps, educated in Pakistani Madrasas and had learned their fighting skills from Mujahidin parties based in Pakistan. As such the younger Taliban barely knew about their own country or history, but from their Madrasas they learnt about the ideal Islamic society created by the Prophet Muhammad five thousand years ago this is what they wanted to emulate. However, a new phenomenon emerging from Afghanistan appeared on the world stage in the mid 90s introducing yet another new term to world journalism, Taliban, the word itself comes from a word in Arabic, but in the West it took on the connotation of an extremist, fundamentalist, violent group of young Muslim fanatics. As such, during the limited rule of five years “many commentators described the Taliban with, catch-all phrases like fanatic, medieval and fundamentalist” . Other titles, like backwards, Mujahidin, militants, terrorists have also been attributed to the Taliban movement. To Ahmad Rashid, the Taliban leadership can be boasting to be the most disabled in the world today and the visitors do not know how to react, whether to laugh or to cry.... The Taliban’s wounds are a constant reminder of twenty years of war, which has killed over 1.5 million people and devastated the country.

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15 Apratim Mukarji, Afghanistan from Terror to Freedom, Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd-2003, p 76
18 Mullah Omar lost his right eye in year 1989 when a rocket exploded close by. The Justice Minister Noorudin Turabi and the former Foreign Minister Mohammad Ghaus are also one eyed, the Mayor of Kabul, Abdul Majid has one leg and two fingers missed. Other leader’s even military commanders have similar disabilities. Ahmad Rashid, Taliban: Islam, Oil and the new Great Game in Central Asia, I B. Tauris Publishers-London-2000, Pp 17-18.
Origin of Taliban

There are varied connotations with regard to the origin and emergence of Taliban depending upon the nature and size of material available. The group has been accused of being a political puppet, created by Pakistan's security, military and religious establishments and sustained financially and otherwise by Saudi Arabia and its allies. On the other hand, the Taliban are praised as a group of religious heroes who sprang from within Afghanistan's Pashtun ethnic majority. Supporters credit them with having replaced violence and social chaos with peace and security in the areas under their domination. To Oliver Tirard-Collet, the so-called Taliban are a most interesting phenomenon, not only because of their success, which possibly puts them in a position to rule the whole of Afghanistan, but also they are an almost entirely new post-Soviet invasion force, a self-designed movement. Which as such, took no part in the resistance and the subsequent bloodshed and struggle of the early 1990s. However, "Taliban are students of "deeni Madrasas" or religious seminaries, which have existed in Afghanistan, the Indian-Subcontinent, and the Central Asia since the arrival of Islam in these areas. Both religious schools and Taliban in the true sense of term existed long before the modern system of schools and education, were introduced to Afghanistan close to a century ago. Many Taliban also used to go to different religious scholars or local mullahs to acquire religious knowledge. Although Taliban have never been, until recent times, at the pinnacle of military and political power, they are not new to Afghanistan. They have been a component of the religious establishment and have always lived in the shadow of other military, political, and economic groups." To Peter Marsden, "the origin

Mullah Sher Bazar, an Afghan fighter known for inflicting heavy losses on the British during the Third Anglo-Afghan war of 1919, was also a talib, as were Mirwais Khan Hotaki, and Mullah Mushki Alam, who fought against the British occupation of Afghanistan. During the national struggle against the Soviet
of the Taliban Movement lies in the Jihad against the Soviet Union and in the refugee camps in Pakistan. Most of the fighters in the movement are too young to have actively fought against the Russians. Rather, they grew up in the refugee camps outside Afghanistan."  

Physically Taliban came on the scene in the year 1996. However the exact origin of the Taliban Movement is still shrouded in mystery. "The most widely circulated theory is that the leadership of Taliban emerged amongst disgruntled young Afghan refugees studying in the Deeni Madaris around Quetta and Peshawar." They in fact, belong to a generation who have never seen their country at peace. They were literary the orphans of the war, rootless and restless, jobless and economically deprived with little self knowledge. Although a number of Taliban leaders had fought Jihad against the Soviet Union, the movement was not a break way from, or an amalgamation of other Mujahidin factions, it was largely based on a new generation who had not been directly involved in the fighting of 1980's.

As far as Afghanistan is concerned, the history of Madaris (religious schools) and Taliban (religious students) is as old as the arrival of Islam in that country. In a similar tone, high ranked army official of the Pakistan viewed the emergence of Taliban in Afghanistan, a phenomenon by itself, rooted in the socio-political and the ideological ethos of the Afghan people. By Taliban is meant who seek knowledge as students. However, the current Taliban phenomenon has its roots in the history of Khurasan, a province of Caliphate of Baghdad, including the territories of Afghanistan. Taliban, in fact, had existed as a factor in Afghan history for the past several centuries. Maulaean-o-Taliban - religious teachers and invaders, Taliban fought alongside the Mujahidin mainly under the leadership of Mohammad Nabi, one of the seven sanctioned Mujahidin leaders in Pakistan (also known as "Peshawar Tanzeeni" Leaders). Afghanistan Associated Press, January, 2001.


students - is a common title generally used while addressing this community, enjoying a very high status in the country. They have often asserted themselves in the past, in periods of crises, invasions and social upheavals. No wonder, that, they were in the forefront to oppose the Soviets, under the command of their senior teachers. However, the Taliban in expansion of their emergence as a movement stated that a *gulzai Pushtun mullah* from Sangisar, Mulla Muhammad Omar formally associated with to the *Hizb-e-Islami* of Younus Khalilis, had a dream in which he was called to lead a campaign by pure young students to cleanse Afghanistan of the corruption and debauchery of warring commanders. A noted communist author in his own ideological tune on the other hand writes, the Taliban emerged in war-ravaged Afghanistan as a type of clerical fascism. It reflected the despair and desperation of uprooted and declassed layers of the rural petty bourgeoisie— the sons of *mullahs*, petty officials, small farmers and traders—who could see no alternative to the social evils that abounded in Afghanistan other than through the imposition of a dictatorial Islamic regime. While tracing the origin of Taliban, Kalim Bhadur is of the view that, their origin traces their roots to uprising in Kandahar by a group of young men, formally students of the religious schools setup by the * Jamaat-ul-Ulama-i-Islam* led by Moulana Fazlur Rahman for Afghan refugees in various parts of the North-West Frontier Province in Pakistan. The students drove away the local Mujihadin boss and established a 'pure Islamic rule' led by one Mullah Omar. He was a

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24 The Madrassas were set up in Khurasan after the advent of Islam in the 9th century AD. The religious seminaries also served as seats of learning, very much on the pattern of modern universities. They produced scholars of great eminence — poets, philosophers, mathematicians, hakeems (physicians), such as Roomi, Firdausi, Jami, Ibne Sina, Imam Bukhari, Tirmizi and many others — all graduates of the Madrassas. Great military leaders such as Shahabuddin Ghauri, Mahmud Ghaznavi, Ahmad Shah Abdali, and also the saints like Ali Hajveri (Data Ganj Bakhsh), Khawaja Moineuddin Chishti and so many others of their like, came from these very madrassas. General Mirza Aslam Beg, Challenges to global Security (N A).


veteran of the fighting against the Soviet army. Later the Pakistani intelligence agency of the Inter Service Intelligence (ISI) took over their organization. Pakistan army personnel were inducted to train young men, supplied with sophisticated weapons and even commanded by Pakistan officers. This was how Taliban came on the scene.\footnote{Kalim Bahadur, *The Taliban Take Over*, P. 150, (Ed.) V D Chopra "Afghanistan and Asian Stability", Oyan Publishing House, Delhi, 1998, p 63-64.}

Since the establishment of Islam in Afghanistan, the Taliban, a sort of religious proletariat, have been recognized as an inseparable part of the social fabric. In addition to running religious schools, mosques, and all kinds of religious affairs, they have distinguished themselves as *Mujahidin* (holy warriors) whenever the cause of Islam or, for that matter, the cause of Afghanistan as a Muslim country, was at stake. Thus, in the context of Afghan history, the Taliban are not an upstart movement. The international community, however, perceives them differently and seems to be confused by the Taliban phenomenon.\footnote{Musa M Maroofi "Special Report ,Html April 1998 , p 47.}

There is yet another viewpoint with regard to the origin of the emergence of Taliban phenomenon in Afghanistan that, when Hazrat Ziaul Mashaiq and Moulana Mohammad Ibrahim Mujeddedi were caught by the Communist regime of Noor Mohammad Taraki and Hafizullah Amin and imprisoned along with 150 other religious leaders. The *Mullahs* called for a Jihad against the pro-communist leaders of their country since they feared persecution at the hands of Tariki and Amin, they fled to Pakistan. Massom Afghani, a religious scholar gave this forced migration a religious connotation by calling it a *Hijrat*\footnote{Musa M Maroofi "Special Report ,Html April 1998 , p 21.}. However, unlike most of the Afghan Mujahidin Movement which emerged in Afghanistan and Pakistan in the context of the struggle (*Jihad*) against the communist regime in Kabul and its Soviet allies, the Taliban was established in the early 1990s withstanding the fact that the *Mujahidin* movements already ruled
Afghanistan"\(^\text{20}\). Ahmad Rashid is of the opinion that "the predominantly Pasthun Taliban emerged in late 1994 as a messianic movement made up of Taliban (literally students) from Islamic madrassa (seminaries) who were living as refugees in Pakistan. They vowed to bring peace to Afghanistan, establish law and order, disarm the population, and impose Shariah (Islamic law). Welcomed by a war-weary Pasthun population, the Taliban were at first remarkably successful and popular until they captured Kabul in 1996 and expressed no desire to rule the country. But ever since then-abetted by their Pakistani and Saudi backers and inspired by ideological mentor such as bin-Laden—the Taliban have committed themselves to conquering the entire country and more.\(^{31}\)

Though complex mix of factors, both internal and external, traditional and modern, contributors to the rise of Taliban "emerged from anonymity in 1993 and in the span of four years have radically changed the complexion of the Afghan civil war by becoming the notable political elite, essentially, the Taliban grew out of the turf battle between the Inter Service Intelligence (ISI) and Interior Ministry in Islamabad during Benazir Bhutto’s second term.\(^{32}\) Another theory with regard to emergence of the movement is believed to be a pipeline politics and is considered an important element in the emergence of Islamic movement of Taliban since 1994.\(^{33}\)

To Margolis, Taliban was yet another product of the inventive military minds of Pakistan Inter Service Intelligence. The ISI boys had

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\(^{33}\) According to Jane’s Defense Weekly, “Pakistan’s direct support, direction, planning and control have been critical to Taliban’s success in overrunning Kabul.” Southern Afghanistan was, however, also the preferred route for a number of proposed pipelines from Turkmenistan to Pakistan. An Argentinean corporation, Bridas, was the first to enter the race. The company obtained rights in Turkmenistan in 1992 and 1993 to explore and exploit the country’s gas fields, and in 1994, opened up discussions with the Turkmen and Pakistani governments over the construction of a gas pipeline, leading to the signing of an agreement for a feasibility study in early 1995. Bridas initially attempted to involve US energy giant, Unocal, in the project. Unocal had plans of its own and later that year signed a separate pipeline agreement, triggering sharp rivalry and a legal battle between various external giants. *A Wounded Afghanistan*, p 227.
somehow cooked up the idea of Taliban as a sort of crusading army that would
rid Afghanistan of anarchy, rapine and banditry, all very plagues at the time. 34

Ethnic Composition

The ethnic composition of Central Asia including Afghanistan plays an
important role in its orientation and also created regional problem over the years
as well. “The country is home to many different ethnic groups and tribes.
Although the different ethnic groups have co-existed for centuries, their attitude
and behavior has not been necessarily friendly towards each other. The ethnic
groups suffer a large degree of differences between each other, in religious,
cultural, social and political matters”35. The Afghans, and especially the majority
of the Pashtun population, live in a tribal, egalitarian society, in which Islam and
the Pashto Code (Pushtunwali) are inseparable from one another - though the
Pashto Code often becomes dominant. During times of crisis, Afghans have
always been led by traditional national leaders and as tribesmen, they defend
their territory against one another, or against other tribes, but during national
crises, tribal differences are shelved and the nation as a whole takes up arms
against an invader or a rebel. 36 The war against the Soviets had a profound effect
on Afghanistan. Changing the balance of power, this had previously favoured

34 Eric S. Margolis. War at the Top of the World. The Struggle for Afghanistan, Kashmir and Tibet,
35 Editorial. Women Rights in the Current Political Backdrop of Afghanistan, Afghan Women’s Network,
DOSSIER 17- September 1997
36 As in the instance of Iran attacking Herat in 1832 Against an infidel, or a non-Muslim, the Afghans
utilize national and religious slogans in an intermixed way. Defending his religion, country, neighbors,
customs or traditions is considered a Jihad for the Afghan. Historical events demonstrate that all national
uprisings were led by traditional national leaders, or by tribal leaders. During the First Afghan War in
1839-42 when Amir Dost Mohammad Khan fled to Bukhara, the lack of leadership was quite apparent.
Tribal and local figures led and coordinated the Afghan national uprising jointly. When Wazir Akbar Khan
appeared, the common leadership bowed before the traditional national leadership that led them to victory.
In the Second Afghan War in 1878, all leaders agreed to the national leadership of Sardar Mohammad
Ayub Khan, although there were tribal and local leaders as well. In this uprising, Mulla Mushke Alam and
Mulla Sahib of Hadda represented the national religious leadership. During the Third Afghan War in 1919,
national leadership lay with King Amanullah, and all tribal chiefs and religious leaders rallied behind him.
Azmat Hayat Khan, the Loya Jirga and the way to a solution to the Afghan Government crisis. The Central Asia
Analysis Jan 22-2002
Afghanistan - Ethnic Composition

- Pashtun: 42% (in gray)
- Tajik & Parsiwan: 27% (in pink)
- Hazara: 9% (in yellow)
- Uzbek: 9% (in dark green)
- Aimak: 4%
- Turkmen: 3% (in light green)
- Baloch: 2% (in orange)
- Other (i.e. Pashai, Nuristani, Brahui, Kizilbash, etc.): 5%
Afghanistan's dominant ethnic group, the Pasthun. Traditionally, the Pasthun dominated Afghanistan's armed forces and, as a community, they were well armed. During the war against the Soviets, other ethnic groups such as the Tajiks, Uzbeks and Hazaras became armed and developed well-organised groups. The Pasthun also became politically fragmented with several Pasthun resistance groups emerging to fight the Soviets. Thus the civil war before the emergence of Taliban was labeled as ethnic strife. To Berent Glatzer, “the present civil war in Afghanistan has frequently been analyzed as an ethnic war: the Pasthun against the Tajik, Hazara and Uzbek or others. Each of the group fighting separately under its own commanders and military structure. The predominantly Pasthun Taliban are believed to aim at printing their ethnic marginalization. Although there is grain of truth in this view, such a simplification is of a little help in evaluating the present situation in Afghanistan and the chances for a peaceful future.” Therefore, “despite this clear and growing ethnic polarization, none of the Afghan factions think in purely ethnic terms instead all compete for power in Kabul, either for hegemony (the Taliban) or for a fair share of power at the centre.

The Taliban are mostly Pasthun and a part of those elements that have lorded over this country since the day of its founder, the famous Ahmad Shah Abdali. The robust Pasthun form 43% of the population (the Taliban that the Pasthun are over 50%, with a light skinned Tajik only half of their number and the rest of the dozen are so ethnic groups comprise 5% or less. The origin of Pasthun is hidden

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in the hoary past...."41 "It is tempting to suggest that, because the Taliban originated in the Pasthun heartland, their philosophy owes much to Pushtunwali. In fact it could be said that it comes from the tradition whereby the Ulema used to call on men to disregard Pushtunwali for a period in favour of the sharia in order to engage in a Jihad against a common enemy. However, it is interesting that the Taliban originated in the Pasthun tribal areas rather than the north, where the religious tradition was very different and perhaps more open to Islamists ideology than the impassioned response to a call to Jihad in defense of tradition of values present in the south. Sreedhar, an Indian author, is of the same opinion that "the Taliban were always considered a Pasthun movement. Neither Mulla Umar nor his mentors in Pakistan ever considered enlarging its political consensus with other ethnic groups. Though the Taliban coupled various groups to increase manpower, the key elements in the power structure remained with Pasthun. Since Afghanistan has generally been ruled by Pasthun, consequently the tribal loyalties among the Pasthun Fraternity remained much stronger"42. Akbar S. Ahmad is also of the same view and holds that "the Taliban were a force in Afghan politics, they were neither tribal chiefs nor members of the royal family who are held sway. Mostly belonging to one ethnic group male and young, narrowly trained in Pakistan’s religions seminaries and burning with a desire to impose a literal version of Islam on Afghanistan, they took the major southern towns of Afghanistan, before capturing Kabul in the late 1990s and established a harsh and uneasy control over most of the country. As they were

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41 Shams-ud-Din and Bhaswati Sarkar, Afghanistan and Central Asia in the new great game, Lancer’s Books-2003, Delhi, p 10, see also H.W. Below, The races of Afghanistan (Calcutta 1880) and Donald N. Wilber, Afghanistan, its people, its security, its culture (New Haven Human Relation Area file Press-1962). (According to the nineteenth century English historians, the persianised Pushtun, who constituted the elite, behaved that they had originally, come from Syria from where they had been expelled by Bakhtunaseor, (Nebuchadnezzar). They then settled in different parts of Persia and Media. Subsequently, they immigrated eastward into mountainous country of Ghor, where they came to be known as Bani Afghan and Bani Israel or children of afghan and children of Israel. Later, it is believed, Khalid bin Walid, a chief of Quraish tribe of Arabia, brought the message of Islam and invited them to embrace the religion of Prophet Muhammad... Modern Afghan scholars and anthropologists claim that a majority of the Pushtun people belongs to the Aryan race)

42 Sreedhar (Ed), Afghanistan in Transition, Indian Council of World Affair, Delhi-2002, p 41
mainly Pukhtun in their ethnic background and they tended to target non-Pukhtun, the later remained rebellious especially in the north.\textsuperscript{43}

However, the ethnic strife not remained a sensitive issue during the Taliban regime. The Talibans are not completely ethnically homogeneous, the ethnic divide has never caused any rapture among themselves, though the Talibanism and ethnicity are often lumped together and slammed as the main factor leading to turmoil, war and the breakdown of state order, are failure to recreate such an order... that the tribal structure of Afghanistan is rather a factor for stability, even if it does not provide the basis for durable political leadership. While holding this view about Taliban, to Kamal Mutinudin, during their negotiations with representatives of Ahmad Shah Masood and Abdul Rashid Dostam, the Taliban were represented by Uzbeks and Tajiks- just to prove the point that the Taliban did not comprise Pashtun alone, But despite the efforts to prove their diverse composition, the vast majority of Taliban's are in fact Pashtun.\textsuperscript{44} However, Taliban's are not simply nationalists, but are devout Sunnis. They have offered the ethnic Tajiks, (their main opponents in Afghanistan), positions in their new government, partly because the Tajiks are also Sunnis.\textsuperscript{45}

**Rise of Taliban**

In the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century the boundaries of Afghanistan were established in the context of rivalry between Britain and Russia. Consequently modern Afghanistan became a pawn of struggles over political ideology and commercial

\textsuperscript{45} On the other hand, they denounce their shia opponents as infidels, because of their fierce opposition to shi'ism, the Taliban are loathed by Iran. Franz -Schurmann, The Taliban Taliban Blend Islam and Marxism Afghanistan thus fall apart, Wordsworth, New Delhi-2002, p 103-104)
influence. In the late 20th century Afghanistan again suffered ruinous effect of prolonged civil war, invasion of USSR thus rightly 'Afghanistan was and continued to be called as an ocean of uncertainties'.

By the year 1992, the average citizen was sick and tired of the civil war that continued for three years in which around 50000 Afghans were killed in the struggle for power between Hikmatyar and Rabbani. The people had lost faith in their leaders, who were making and breaking alliances over night. Because of the fact that throughout 'Mujahidin rule, the prevailing disorder paralyzed any attempt to reconstruct the country. The leaders clashed personally, ethnically, culturally and on religious grounds while they randomly printed money to buy support, warlords ran the areas they controlled like their personal fiefdoms, extorting exorbitant toils at checkpoints for the passage of goods and people along the roads. Concerned on lookers virtually despaired of the Afghans ever reaching an internal settlement which would enable them to lay down their weapons.

The Taliban, under these havoc circumstances stepped into the congested and unstable political scenario of the country in 1996. The presence was first noted in the areas of Khandahar provinces during 1994. There is no shortage of founding myths about the group, however, the storey related by the Taliban about their origin is that in July, 1994, a guerrilla leader in the Khandahar region raped and killed three women. A mullah from the frontier area, Maulvi Mohamad Omar, was approached by the locals for their help, who in response recruited a group of religious students and together they executed the leader and dispersed his

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46 In the late 20th century Afghanistan again suffered ruinous effect of prolonged civil war, invasion of USSR thus rightly 'Afghanistan is called as an ocean of uncertainties'.
militia. The group started to gain a reputation and decided to recruit comrades for a *Jihad* against those who had betrayed the country. To begin with, initially they proceeded to clear the road from Quetta to Kandhar of the road locks being used to levy ransom on traffic. In the first instance, they Captured spin Baldak and its well stocked arsenal, which became the main centre where from the war was latter on initiated\(^4^9\). With the unrest spreading to the country side, the official history of Taliban is reported to have said that the people began to ask, 'why our religious scholars and students, who preach justice and peace, do not do something to save us from injustice and war?' In response to this, the Taliban stood once again to their feet, closed their books and came out of their Madrassa class room to begin the second phase of their holy *jihad* against the wickedness and the corruption. The history says, the rise of Taliban was accompanied by a *Fatwa* (religious decree) issued by Islamic scholars, confirming the legitimacy of their uprising against corruption and vice. In this way, the new movement was called the Taliban Islamic Movement of Afghanistan\(^5^0\). Nonetheless, rise of Taliban to B. V. Rao is that the Taliban is a fundamental Islamic Movement, which originated in the Kandhar district of Afghanistan. The founder father was Mullah Mohammad Omar who lost an eye while fighting the Soviet troops which had occupied Afghanistan. After the Soviet left the country in 1989, he found that the warlords had turned the country into rubble with their internecine fights and innocent people were put to severe hardships like looting, bribery and rape of women. He started a school with about 30 members-mostly young students. This movement snowballed into a big organization with moral, material and financial support of countries like Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. In the course of time, the refugee students who had fled the country due to civil war joined hundreds of Madrasas run by *Jannah-e-Ulema-i-Islam*, a traditionalist Sunni


party. By 1994-1995 the Taliban established its military outfits in order to unite the country under its banner.  

The Taliban by changing the entire scenario of the region, within a short span of time, is an ample proof of external support, rendered to it by the countries like Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Pakistan has been broadly due to turmoil in Afghanistan, right from Soviet invasion in 1979. On the one side the burden of millions of refugees who fled during Afghan war was economically and socially a cause of worry for government of Pakistan and on the other hand the political instability inside Afghanistan was a matter of concern for Pakistan. It is in this backdrop that Pakistan would aspire for needs to have a stable and favorable government in Afghanistan for their interests. "emergence may be regarded as a late result of more than thirteen years of Jihad against Soviet invaders and their Afghan surrogates, to begin with most leaders of the Taliban and much of their rank and file are former Mujahidin themselves, shaped by a common experience of fighting and sacrifices not only for the liberation of their home land, but more so as a religious duty in defense of their Islamic beliefs and values."  

All attempts by Pakistan, which had played host to these Mujahidin factions during the years of Soviet intervention, on the formation of Consensus regime in Kabul had been foiled by the ego of one or the other leader. It was in this backdrop that there appeared as if from nowhere, a powerful, well organized and well armed force which defeated every warlord one after the other and later captured Kabul in an almost peaceful coup d’etat in September 1996. As such the Pakistan found in movement, the objective of pursuit, as it preserves its interest represented by the route of trade with the near-by Islamic republics. Accordingly, the Pakistan supported and facilitated the movement by providing

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52 Deutsche Zeitschryl Für, Afghanistan’s Taliban, An Islamic Revolution, Politik and Wirtschaft Des Orient- Vol-38, German Journal for Politics and Economics of the Middle East.
moral and logistic support. In similar context, writes, Anwar-ul-Haq Ahady, the most significant development in the Afghan conflict in 1994 was the rise of the Taliban movement. The overwhelming numbers of the Taliban are Pushtuns Islamic Studies students in Seminaries in Pakistan and Southwest Afghanistan. Most of these seminaries in Pakistan are controlled by the Jamiate-e-Ulama-i-Islami of Pakistan, led by Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman. There are two major views about the rise of the Taliban. One theory explains the rapid success of the Taliban in capturing southwest Afghanistan in terms of local conditions such as anarchy, the people’s need for security, and the immoral conduct of many warlords. The other theory argues that the Taliban movement was organized by Pakistan to promote her interests in Afghanistan. Probably the combination of the two theories is closer to the truth than either one alone. The rise of the Taliban was certainly a response to the anarchic conditions in the Pashtun populated areas, but without Pakistan’s support, the movement would have not become as powerful as to defeat major warlords.54

Though, there are several versions of how a small group of Taliban, led by Mullah Omar, took control of areas around Kandahar, the answer is simple, that the internal cycle of violence, destruction, and chaos of Mujahidin era created the conditions for the rise of puritanical Taliban. Despite all the facts, “the ranks of the Taliban grew in direct proportion to the society’s desperate desire for order”55 However, the rise of Taliban to power may be somewhat artificial and thus their appearance on the Afghan stage may be transitory, precisely because key elements are missing that could make their role more natural and permanent specifically, the Taliban lack talented political leadership, competent military performance and ideological creativity. Their leader, Mullah Mohammad Omar

is by all accounts a simple man who seldom meets with outsiders and few of other Taliban leaders have any political background at all. More or less, the Taliban rising almost mystically from sheer chaos, more as a result of timing than the military might, and the Afghan people seemed to accept their deliverance.

Organization of Taliban:

The Afghanistan is the most unfortunate country that witnessed foreign invasions right from 2nd century B.C but every time the Afghans offered stiff resistance. They defeated British in 19th century and driven-out Russians in late 20th century. It is in backdrop of this composition that the US presence in the area is also looked upon with doubt; As Afghans have been inimical to every kind of direct and indirect foreign role. The fiercely independent nature of the people, the binding family and tribal loyalties, and the isolation of the country have contributed to the rejection of both the capitalists and communists models of development. This kind of attitude always kept war like situation in Afghanistan became the competing ground for ideological rivalry between the erstwhile South-Union and the United States, within this great-game ensued, the political uncertainty and turmoil became an inherent part of Afghanistan. And after the withdrawal of USSR, from Afghanistan, there was a hope of peace in Afghanistan, but the things had gone vice-versa and the tug of war between “Mujahidin” factions for hunger of power resulted in un-ending civil war, though the attempts were made to unite them worldwide, but failed. The civil war adversely affected all the section existing socio-economic and political fabric

58 Among the groups who surrendered (to the Taliban (through a peaceful arrangement) was that of Mullah Naqib, who along with a group of other warlords, had divided up the province amongst themselves. One of these warlords was Lala, a former thief and “Sarbaz” (communist militia) who had defected to the Mujahidin during the Jihad era and had now become a post Jihad era warlord of a sector of Qandahar. Afghan Associated Press-2001(AFP)
war miserably destroying causing immense human losses. This was the period when radicalism became relevant and expectedly the “Taliban” emerged as a group committed to Islam that promised to establish society free of vices, and to ensure peace in the region. Thus in broader sense, the basis of Taliban’s emergence is peace and not violence. In shorter span of time, they organized themselves, so quickly and taking control of two-third of Afghanistan, which comprehended, that people of Afghanistan has shown good response and faith in “Taliban”. As such, they began consolidating their position and procuring weapons by winning the allegiance of several local military commanders. While there is no consensus about the triggering events that would mark the rise of the Taliban, it is clear that the initial popularity of the Taliban was due to the complete collapse of law and order under the so called Mujahidin era, which had officially begun in 199259.

“Many amongst us were not prepared to believe that a group of young Afghan students living in Quetta would be able to organize a movement on such a large scale by themselves. After all it was not an easy task for raw hands to implement the stupendous task of overthrowing established regimes, however motivated they might be and however weak the de-facto government in Kabul appears to be....”60. The Taliban Islamic Movement of Afghanistan is a genuine gross root movement that draws its power of support from the masses of the Afghan people,” the history claims. After the Taliban succeeded in driving the “Corrupt” forces of Rabbani and his military commander from Kabul in September 1996, they were able to establish a central administration in the capital, run by people of good faith and intention”. This was the first administration in almost twenty years that was truly interested in the well-being of the citizens and trying hard to

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make life easier for them. Thus, the Taliban who emerged from the masses of
the people have started organizing themselves to deliver their effort to alleviate
sufferings, pain, and hardships of the people to ensure complete peace and
security across the country and to guide to Shariah as the law of land.

**Taliban Ruling Structure:**

The Taliban ruling structure is based on their understanding of Islamic precepts
of the government. After three days deliberations the assembly decided that
Mullah Omar was the best among them to lead the Islamic Emirate and to achieve
its objective due to his leadership qualities, boldness, and wisdom and par
excellent contribution to jihad against infidels (Kafir). Mullah Omar was called in
the final session to listen to the judgment of learned ones. As they announced his
Emirate, he wept bitterly and begged them to spare him of this great
responsibility; while pleading that there were many among them who in his
opinion were far more suitable for this great job. But the grand assembly of
learned ones unanimously asked him to accept the responsibility. Thus Mullah
Omar was established as the Amur-ul-Mumin, with the title "Al-Mujahid". It is
headed by an Amur (Mullah Mohammed Omar), who is assisted by Shuras or
consultative bodies. Since their concept of Islamic authority is that of the Amur
leading a Millat (community) of Muslim. Mullah Omar renamed the Islamic state

In this context, initially a Shura was established with the following compositions:

1. Mullah Mohammad Omar Akhand, (Gilzai Pashtuns). Amurul
Momineen.

2. Mullah Mohammad Rabbani (Pashtuns), Chairman of the caretaker
council and Deputy Commander of the Taliban movement.

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61 Apratim Mukarji, Afghanistan from terror to Freedom, Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd.- 2003, p 68
62 Imtiaz Gul, The Unholy Nexus, Pak. Afghan relations under the Taliban, p 264
63 Barnett R.Rubin, Afghanistan Under The Taliban, 1999 NA.
Despite wary circumstances, economic stagnation and opposition from many factions inside, Taliban anyhow succeeded to organize and established a government effectively, which was an achievement itself. The Taliban Movement which included Islamisation of rule, expulsions of communists and eradication of manifested corruption and bribery, incessantly persuaded leaders of various Jeihatdi parties to join Taliban and strengthen its power. The Taliban, however, lacked a state of structure. Ministers, departments, bureaucratic machinery, and an organized army or police force, which are symbols of modern governments, were not initially functioning in Taliban-controlled areas. The educated officials needed to run ministries had mostly fled the country, and filling their vacancies was not a priority. The first task was to establish law and order and to ward off threats from anti-Taliban forces. The trappings of government were to come-later it was quite evident that once, the Taliban could have their sway in Kabul, they could easily claim their supremacy in almost whole of Afghanistan. After this achievement, the recognition by various lowers became essential for Afghanistan and in this regard, Pakistan came forward to help it. Indeed it was a difficult proposition as Dostam and Massood were not prepared to agree on proposals put forward before them. They were not prepared to accept Taliban as the rulers of Afghanistan. Besides the stiff opposition from Northern Alliance, taking stock of their ‘accomplishments’ in

four years of rule, which also formed the basis of the Taliban government’s case for granting of United Nations membership by unseating the Burhanuddin Rabbani’s Government from the membership, the Taliban history claimed in 2000 that the achievements of the regime were as follows.67

1. Restoration of full security of the citizens.
2. Pursuance of honest and sincere negotiations.
5. Search for mutual respect and friendly relations towards all countries.
6. Establishment of a credible and accountable Islamic regime.
7. Protection of human rights and liberties.
8. Restoration of women’s safety, dignity and freedom.
9. Observance of Islamic Hejab or the veil.
10. Women’s education in the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.
11. Establishment of a representative government on the basis of Islamic Sharia.
12. The Islamic Emirate lends full support to the United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations.
13. Efforts to combat production and consumption of illicit drugs.
14. The Islamic Emirate is against the all forms of terrorism.
15. The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan intends to rebuild the war torn country.

The Taliban’s assertion that they had merely re-introduced the 1964 constitution was clearly disingenuous, since that constitution contained distinct elements of secularism and liberalism, and for example, gave men and women equality before law. It will be more correct to say that the Taliban reverted to the era following the overthrow of Amanullah, when first under the Bacha-i-Saqao and then under Nadir Shah and Zahir Shah, the final authority in legal and social affairs was conceded to the Ulema. The Taliban’s model was thus closer to the Nadir Shah’s constitution of 1931 than to Zahir Shah’s of 1964, and closer still to the state of affairs existing under the Bacha. As far as the restoration of

representative institutions was concerned, there was all along no sign of any intention to modify the pattern of Oligarchic rule exercised by the Khandahar Shura. In contrary, to M.J.Gohari, with an eye to the fact that the Taliban, by both there kind of Hanafite beliefs and years of association with the Saudi way of life, either in Pakistan or in Saudi Arabia itself have developed a transparent view of the Saudi political system, and with attention to the predominance of Iranian experience which has inspired the politics of Islam for the last twenty years, One might rightly conclude that the structure of the Taliban's political thought must contain strong impacts from both aforesaid system.

Further he says, the Taliban experience in power is to some extent immature in comparison to the twenty years Old Iranian government. However, lines of resemblance and discrepancy are already observable.

The similarities could be identified in some main areas:

1. The Taliban government is not headed by a President or a democratically elected figure in the modern sense.
2. Representing the last Shiite Imam (now in Occultation) the Iranian leader considers himself to be the deputy of that Imam who in turn is the sole representative of God. The selection of a leader by the elected clergy is not public approval, but it is public recognition of the leader's qualification for succession.
3. The Taliban selection of a leader is basically a responsibility of the Ulema association.
4. The head of State in Taliban government enjoys extensive authority and executive powers.

Hypothetically, the discrepancies are considerable. However, one can ignore some of them under practical conditions.

1. Considering the crucial and continuous role of the Ulema in identifying the ruler and drawing up internal and international policies. It would be technically incorrect to describe the emir or Amir-al-Muminin (The

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Commander of the Faithful) as the pivotal structure for the Taliban political system.

2. Receiving his legitimacy from the Ulama, the Taliban leader must recognize that he is representing the Prophet (S.A.W), whose blessings and approval ought to be sought through the Ulama. Therefore, he needs to consult them on a regular basis in order to keep religiously justifying the foundation of his decisions.

3. The Taliban have frequently made clear their stand against democracy in its contemporary sense. Ironically enough, in the Iranian example in which the leader is claimed to be representing the occulted Shiite Imam and as a result Allah Himself and that there is no selection but recognition of the leaders, there has been a constant claim on the democratic nature of government.

However, in practical terms, even in the Taliban experience, the role of Ulama can be restricted to that of providing religious legitimacy with the Anwar-al- Mumuniin in full charge using his political and financial powers to act freely. A manifestation of this kind of Ulama leaders' relationship can be found in the Saudi experience which merits consideration in this context”.

About the political system of Taliban, controversial sentiment came into being. Some authors saw the movement as a puritan form of Islamic system, propounded by the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W), and some are of the opinion that Taliban have given Islamic political system a new face and identity, and showed reluctance to compromise on any political system except their own. In context of Taliban's political organization Ahmad Rashid writes, "If there was a single inspiration and hope for peace amongst ordinary Afghans after the Taliban emerged, it was the fact that they governed through a collective political leadership, which was consultative and consensus building, rather than dominated by one individual. The Taliban Shura in Kandahar claimed it was following the early Islamic model where discussion was followed by a consensus amongst 'The Believers' and sensitivity of accessibility to the public were

\[^{20}M. J. Gohari, The Taliban Ascent to power, Oxford University press 1999, p 52\]
deemed important. The Shura model was also heavily based on the Pashtun tribal jirga or council where all clan chiefs took part in deciding upon important issues which the tribe faced, on my early visit to Kandahar, I was impressed with the debates, which sometimes went on all nights as commanders, Mullahs and ordinary fighters were called into give their views, before Mullah Omar took a decision. Many Afghans were also impressed by the fact that initially the Taliban did not demand the power for themselves. Instead they insisted they were restoring law and order only to hand over power to a government which was made up of "good Muslims", however, between 1994 and the capture of Kabul in 1996, the Taliban's decision making process was to change and become highly centralized, secretive, dictatorial and inaccessible. As Mullah Omar became more powerful and introverted, declining to travel to interact and understand the rest of the country and meet the people under his control, the movements power structure developed all the faults of the Mujahidin and communist predecessors. Moreover after 1996, the Taliban made known their desire to become the sole rulers of Afghanistan without the participation of other groups. They maintained that ethnic diversity of the country was sufficiently represented in the Taliban movement itself, and set out to conquer the rest of the country to prove it. 71

Aims and Objectives of Taliban:

The Taliban perpetually announced that they were fighting merely for the word of Islam to remain transcendent. However, at the same time they emphasized that their first task was to purify the country from the stains of hypocrisy that manifested themselves in the so-called Mujahidin. Mujahidin internal conflicts, which inflicted heavy damages and huge suffering on Afghanistan, provided the

Taliban with a golden chance to verify their claim over the corruption and hypocrisy of their opponents. Moreover, "The Taliban also claimed to support the principle of representative, non-discriminatory government based on the teachings of the Shariah, and insisted that, when circumstances change and an appropriate environment more conducive to political dialogue is created, the Islamic State will take further steps towards solidifying its representational foundations. In the meantime, a 'caretaker administration' had been chosen by the Ulema of the country, representing all the groups which had struggled for the freedom of the Afghanistan.

In backdrop of this milieu, "The aim of the Taliban was to establish an Islamic government in Afghanistan where the Shariah law, as interpreted by them, will be the law of the land. The country is to be called the Islamic State of Afghanistan and will be governed in accordance with the Sunni Hanafi Fiqh. A nominated Shoora is to run the affairs of the state in keeping with the edicts of the Amrul-Mominene.

The Taliban believe in non-interference in the affairs of other countries and similarly desire no outside interference in their country's internal affairs. No body or organization, whatever its identity or goals may be, will be allowed to carry out any terrorist or criminal activities in other Islamic countries, says their unwritten 'Constitution'.

The official handout circulated by the Taliban regime in May 1997 lists the objectives of the Taliban as follows:

- Restoration of peace.

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• Collection of weapons.
• Implementation of the Shariah

While holding this view Amira Howeidy, writes, "It is important to point out here that the Taliban polled as many Afghans as possible about the ruling system they desired. In the end, there was consensus on four objectives: maintaining security; clearing the country of arms; implementing the Islamic Shari' a; and defeating the other factions. So our targets were also the targets of the Afghan people. Since what we are doing is the will of the people, the international community must support us. We are talking about a country that has lost two million people in wars; a country whose infrastructure has been reduced to rubble; a destroyed country. We wanted to put an end to this."

Further in order to maintain law and order and to bring the peace in Afghanistan, Taliban, by disarming civilians and non-Taliban militias, the new regime brought peace and tranquility to Kabul where some 50,000 people had died in the civil conflict that erupted after the fall of the Najibullah regime. This consideration weighed so heavily that many non-Taliban politicians, including Hamid Karzai (1957-; r, 2001- ), who had briefly been deputy foreign minister in the Burhanidin Rabbani government, backed the Taliban. With these aims and objectives, Taliban with lesser resistance from the opposition, succeeded to took the power with the lightening speed under the banner of Islam. "According to a Pakistani Scholar the Taliban movement was a reaction to the self-seeking and destructive policies of the so-called Mujahidin, whose pretensions to Islam and leadership were discredited. It was in this ideological vacuum and an atmosphere of Hobson state of anarchy and lawlessness that made the Taliban rule acceptable to the common man. The objectives of this movement were well

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76 Dilip Hiro, War without End: The Rise of Islamist Terrorism and Global Response. p 251
encapsulated in an interview given by a Taliban spokesman, Mullah Wakil Ahmad, asked how and why the Taliban movement had started, he replied, after the Mujahidin parties came to power in 1992, the Afghan people thought that peace would prevail in the country. However, the leaders began to fight over power in Kabul. Some local leaders, particularly in Kandhar, formed armed gangs that fought each other. There was widespread corruption and theft, and there were road-blocks everywhere, women were being attacked, raped and killed. Therefore, after these incidents, a group of students from religious schools decided to rise against these leaders in order to alleviate the Suffering of the residents of Kandhar province.²⁸

The aim of the Taliban was the purification of Afghanistan alone. There was no suggestion at least among the leadership that they were seeking to spread a particular interpretation of Islam beyond Afghanistan borders. This view was confirmed by the Taliban liaison office in Kandhar, which quoted Mullah Omar as saying that his main goal was to rid Afghanistan of 'corrupt', Western oriented time-servers.²⁹ Further classification of the Taliban creed was given in broadcast by the Taliban's voice of Shurrah station on 5 November 1996 and the Taliban who have emerged from the masses of the people; have started their struggle to deliver their compatriots from pain and hardship, to ensure complete peace and security across the country by collecting weapons, by doing away with feudal principalities have and there in the country and by creating a powerful Islamic government in Afghanistan. The Taliban, in fact have come to power in one of Asia's most strategically located countries with one single minded aim; to redeem the entire Islamic world of one billion people.³⁰ The rapid emergence of the Islamic Movement of Taliban of Afghanistan led to many positive

²⁸ Dr. G.N. Khaki, Human Rights in Afghanistan during Taliban Rule: An Islamic Perspective, P
²⁹ Dr. G.N. Khaki, Human Rights in Afghanistan during Taliban Rule: An Islamic Perspective, P
³⁰ Dr. G.N. Khaki, Human Rights in Afghanistan during Taliban Rule: An Islamic Perspective, P
expectations. After decades of exploitation Afghanistan witnessed peaceful, neutral and non-greedy force. They came on the scene when the Afghans had lost all faith in the country’s leadership. Their early critics did not predict that the Taliban would make any difference in the outcome of the war or be able to manage success. With little fighting, the Taliban took control over the Southern part of the country within a few months. There they disarmed militia commanders and reestablished law and order by applying a rather strict interpretation of Islamic law. With a piecemeal approach, the Taliban soon occupied larger territories and became a formidable force. 81 While praising the Taliban for bringing peace in Afghanistan, Barry Bearak writes, “before the Taliban, this country belonged to warlords, and the simple act of going to visit my village was impossibility“ said a U. N. Official who is an Afghan. My daughters sit in the house and cry to me. We want education. This is heart breaking, but peace is the first priority for people here. The Taliban must be given credit for accomplishing this”. 82 This is because of the fact that establishing peace in Afghanistan is by no means an easy task. Taliban Administration was sincere and desirous in maintaining a perfect social order in Afghanistan but were being interrupted by western intelligent agencies, who were having their own interests in Afghanistan.

Military Dimension of Taliban

The emergence of the Taliban was followed by a series of rapid military victories which carried them right through and made them the unchallenged rulers of almost two-third Afghanistan. In the beginning the people were generally

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content with the Taliban administration as they introduced the much needed security and peace into the area. With the consideration of imposing Islamic law, restoring law and order and organizing all Afghan factions of Islamic thought under one Umbrella, the Taliban initially captured Kandhar and its peripheries and captured Kabul while dethroning Burhan-ud-din-Rabbani’s regime in September 1996, having lesser manpower and smaller number of arms and ammunition, but still managed to lead the Afghanistan’s 90 percent of territories in short span of time. Though, Taliban Army is not structured like conventional armies. They fight in traditional lashkars, maintaining loose formations, which enable them to exercise great mobility. They fight like ghazis and die like shahids. To William Maley and others, “Taliban’s did not originate from a standard military training programme, but from a complex mixture of social and political contexts, which went some way towards explaining their character...they were pathogenic force, whose view of the world conspicuously omitted the pragmatic moderation which historically had muted the application of tribal and religious codes in Afghan society. The Afghan in particular have demonstrated this ability several times. The Anglo-Afghan wars of the late nineteenth century resulted in the defeat of the British Indian army at the hands of Afghans armed with relatively lighter arms and later-on Afghan’s succeeding the soviet troops even though they were pitched against the might of a superpower.

The military situation in Afghanistan was not quite the same when the Taliban came on the scene as there were no foreign troop’s occupying their country. However, the ruling clique had more or less lost the support of the majority of the people of Afghanistan, and the Mujahidin, who had for long struggled to evict Soviet soldiers from their land, had begun to behave like occupation forces

84 Hafeez Malik, Taliban Rule and National reconstruction in Afghanistan Pakistan’s Option, p 78
themselves. It was, therefore, not very surprising that the war weary people joined a movement which promised them security from the self-appointed warlords.\textsuperscript{86} At first some assistance in the form of money and weapons came from Haji Bashar of Maiwand, a commander of Malawi Younous Khalis’s Hezb-i-Islami, and Abdul Ghaffar Akhundzadeh, the Major potentate in neighboring Helmand province. In September, however, it appears that Mullah Mohammad Rabbani, a close associate of Omar’s traveled to Kabul with several companions, met President Rabbani and gained a level of endorsement and financial backing from Rabbani, who appears to have seen in the Taliban a force that might be used against Gulbuddin Hekmatyar’s Hezb-i-Islami which was rocketing Kabul.

In contrary to the above statement, one of the Taliban spokesman Haji Mullah Mohammad Abbas Akhound (then Health Minister) in an interview with Al-Ahram Weekly, Cairo, Says\textsuperscript{87}

Q. How did the purportedly poor Taliban movement finance itself from 1994 to 1996 when it took over Kabul?\textsuperscript{a}
R. It is true that at first the Taliban was very poor. Food and clothing were provided by the inhabitants of the areas we were taking over. Moreover, there was some revenue from agricultural production. There was also income from customs duties collected along the borders of the areas we had captured.
Q. But there are accusations that the Taliban received financial support from Pakistan?
R. We did not receive any financial support from Pakistan or any other country.”

\textsuperscript{86} Kamal Matimuddin, \textit{The Taliban Phenomenon}, Afghanistan, 1994-97, p 16
\textsuperscript{87} Amira Howeidy, \textit{The Will of People}, Al-Ahram Weekly - Cairo, 11 November-1998, Issue No.402
"Initially, the Taliban were given a few weeks of training and then are sent to the battlefield. A typical Taliban soldier wears shalwar and qameez and sandals and a black turban." Moreover, the Taliban forces, which proceeded to advance through Afghanistan during the winter of 1994-1995 were equipped with tanks, APCs, artillery and even aircraft, and, however, much equipment they may have acquired in spin Baldak, Kandhar and elsewhere, they could not, despite energetic denials, have operated without training, ammunition, fuel and maintenance facilities provided by Pakistan—many indeed, were Pakistanis—their number quickly grew, until within no more than some six months, they had mobilized possibly as many as 20000 fighting men. Most of them were allowed to come across from Pakistan—many, indeed, were Pakistanis, and their basic training took place in camps not border. It is also inconceivable that a force composed mostly of former guerrillas and student amateurs could have operated with the degree of skill and organization which the Taliban showed almost from the outset of their operations. While there were undoubtedly former members of the Afghan armed forces among their offensives were conducted, and the quality of such elements as their communications, air support and artillery bombardments, lead to the inescapable conclusion that they must have owed much to a Pakistani military presence, or at least professional support.

Islamabad has decided that Taliban is the best vehicle for achieving its objectives in Afghanistan and is willing to pay a high price to continue this support. Islamabad has recognized the Taliban as the government of Afghanistan and has sought to encourage others to do so. Many Pakistani political groups also have developed ties with the Taliban and sent people inside Afghanistan to work with the Taliban. The most important contribution Pakistan made has been its military support. The Pakistani military has deployed units inside Afghanistan in several locations. Pakistanis assist the Taliban in both planning and implementing their

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88 Hafeez Mahk, *Taliban Rule and National reconstruction in Afghanistan: Pakistan's Option*, p77
military operations. At times, Pakistani units have participated directly in operations against the opposition. The fact that Pakistan is willing to put its own people at risk is an indication of Pakistan's commitment to its Afghan policy.90

It is also said that, keen to see Afghanistan under strong central rule to allow a US-led group to build a multi-billion-dollar oil and gas pipeline, Washington urged key allies Pakistan and Saudi Arabia to back the militia's bid for power in 1996, analysts said. But it was soon forced to abandon its brief and shadowy flirtation with the Islamic purists, who US officials now say are unfit to rule, as the militia began imposing its brutal version of Islamic law, sparking a violent outcry from US women's groups. While the United States has denied supporting the Taliban's rise, experts say that at the time they seized the capital five years ago, Washington saw the militia as a strange but potentially stabilizing force.91 Taliban militia had strong determination and will power and it is on the basis of that they were decisive in shaping the socio-economic spectrum of Afghanistan in totality, but could not prevail long because of intervention of superpowers at intervals.